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ABSTRACT

This reprint of a 10 day report, published in the "Anchorage Daily News," January 10 to January 20, 1988, examines Alaskan native alcohol use, and attendant suicide, homicide, and accident. In the village of Alakanuk, a town of 550, for example, there were eight suicides, dozens of suicide attempts, two murders, and four drownings in 16 months. Alcohol related problems extend from the drinkers through their families to all members of the community, causing fear and stress. This series of news stories, reprinted in newspaper format, considers whether alcohol is the cause of this cultural distress or an anesthetic applied to numb a deeper malady. Editorial overview relates problems to the takeover of native culture and destruction of the fabric of their way of life. It describes government removal of children to Indian schools from which they returned with elevated aspirations, diminished prospects for advancement, and little experience in family living. Reprinted stories probe alcohol treatment, community efforts to outlaw abuse, Fetal Alcohol Syndrome, alcohol-induced mass murder, bootleggers, and the growing sobriety movement. The reprint includes readers' letters in response to the original printing of these stories. (DHP)

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